1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

indolent will then have to work for subsistence or sink into misery, the industrious and thrifty will prosper and after a period of no little angry strife a happier life of personal freedom and domestic felicity will be the inheritance of future generations. [1]

One of the first reforms introduced by the British was the abolition of slavery. Every high-caste landholder had apportioned to him, from ancient times, one or more families of slaves according to the size of his estate. These slaves belonged to a very low caste like the Poleyas. The legal abolition of slavery did not, however, materially affect the landholders, many of whom were Coorgs. But when, in the fifties of the last century, coffee plantations were opened up all over Coorg and there was a sudden demand for coolie labour, many of the slaves deserted their former masters to work for cash wages on the plantations. It was only then that the condition requiring a person holding land on the *jamma* tenure not to sublet his land was relaxed to the extent of permitting him to sublet a fourth of his estate.

Before the coming of coffee, rice was not only the staple crop, but also the chief commercial crop, as not many people owned the evergreen forests where cardamom throve. The cultivation of rice was the most important concern of every landholding joint family and its slave-families. Excess of rice was disposed of in Malabar where articles not available in Coorg were bought.

As a food crop rice has an intrinsic importance which no purely commercial crop can adversely affect, but coffee soon took a place next only to rice in its importance. It is necessary to mention here that the cultivation of coffee, in the beginning at any rate, was subject to the hazards of destruction by pests like the 'bug' and 'borer'. It was also bound up with the vagaries of a world market.

Coffee changed the face of Coorg. It brought in European planters who settled down all over Coorg; it cut the bonds binding the slaves to their traditional masters; it induced the seasonal inflow of labour from Mysore and South Canara, and finally it brought money to the planter as well as to the labourers on the plantations and to the total community.

The annexation of Coorg by the British did not mean a complete break with past administration. The British administrative system was at first based on the old system, and the modifications intro-

[1] Op. cit., p. 130.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952/ AW5 Coorg AW5

duced were few and far between. The authority of village elders and of the hereditary village headman was recognized and the established administrative institutions were continued.

This phase, however, ended soon after 1858 when the administration of India was taken over by the British Government from the East India Company. Coorg then became part of the territories administered directly by the British in India and of the elaborate administrative and judicial machinery stretching over the whole of India. Numerous Acts like the Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and Indian Stamp Act applied to every part of India including Coorg.

Under the British, Coorg was a Chief Commissioner's Province, a position which continues even today. Until 1942 the British Resident in Mysore State was also the Chief Commissioner of Coorg, and Coorg was governed from Bangalore, the headquarters of the Resident. In 1942, the two offices of Resident of Mysore and Chief Commissioner of Coorg were separated and a distinguished Coorg, Dewan Bahadur Kēṭōḷira Chengappa was appointed Chief Commissioner. Below the Chief Commissioner was the Superintendent who lived in Coorg. A legislative council consisting of twenty members (fifteen elected and five nominated), presided over by the Chief Commissioner, was constituted in 1924. The council had the right to vote on the budget, move resolutions, and ask supplementary questions.

A NOTE ON SLAVERY IN COORG

Slavery was widely prevalent in pre-British Coorg. The slaves and agricultural labourers did most of the actual work of the farm under the supervision of their masters who held the land from the state on one of the several forms of tenure prevalent in Coorg. The number of slaves in 1834, when the British annexed Coorg, was estimated at 6,089, but we do not know whether this included the slaves on the Rāja's farms (or *paṇyas*), who were variously estimated at 1,757, 1,720, 1,500, and 1,233.

Slaves were referred to as *jammada āḷu* (or '*jamma* servants'),[1] and there were two classes of slaves, one praedial, called *bhūmi jammada āḷu* (*bhūmi* = land), and the other personal, called *okkalu*

[1] It probably meant that they were slaves of the man holding land on *jamma* tenure.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

jammada āḷu (*okkalu* = farm, house, family). The former could not be sold apart from the land on which they worked, and when land was sold, they went with it automatically. The personal slaves, on the other hand, could be sold or mortgaged, and had to move with the masters wherever the latter went. They were, in fact, the movable property of the masters.

The proprietors of the *okkalu jammada āḷu* in Coorg have the power of selling them [the slaves], but not to a person who will carry them out of the country, unless the slaves themselves consent. The rights of slaves consist in receiving subsistence and protection for themselves and their families from their masters, who are bound to observe the custom of the country with respect to the quantity of food and clothing given to them. Three seers of rice for a male slave, two for a female, and one and a half to a boy or girl, are given by their master, independently of salt and curry stuff which are supplied by them, sometimes monthly, and at other times daily. The slaves are likewise entitled to a load of grain once a year, at the time when the crops are reaped. This quantity is called *horay*, which varies in different *nāḍs*. The slaves reside in houses provided for them by their masters in the small village, and a piece of land is appropriated to their use in which they usually grow vegetables or tobacco. Besides the subsistence given to the slaves, and the allowance above-mentioned at the time of the harvest, they are supplied by their masters with clothing twice a year, first, when the seed is sown, and secondly, when the crops are reaped.[1]

In regard to the treatment of slaves by their masters, it is said that the cultivators in Coorg, activated by self-interest, if not a better motive, pay much attention to their comfort. Aware as they are that any act of severity on their part will induce their slaves to abscond, a circumstance which would subject them to much trouble and inconvenience, they protect and treat them with kindness as forming a part of their family. The proprietors in Coorg possess no power to inflict severe punishment upon their slaves but they have authority to chastise them moderately for any faults they may commit. . . . The wealth of a cultivator is generally estimated by the number of his slaves, as in proportion to the number he has lands under cultivation. . . .[2]

Certain incidents described in Coorg folklore make it clear that frequently great affection prevailed between master and slave.

[1] 'Memorandum respecting the condition of the slaves in Coorg, transmitted with Col. Fraser's letter to Mr. Secretary Macnaughten, dated 14th July, 1834', in the volume of appendixes giving the evidence on the subject of slavery, annexed to the *Report of the Indian Law Commission*, 1 February 1839, pp. 545–6.

[2] Op. cit., p. 546.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

567 The slave was a member of the master's household and a proverb compares him to one's eldest son. The master had to provide funds for the slave's wedding and have him looked after during illness and old age. On his side the slave was required to perform [702] every type of service. He was also liable to be called upon to bear arms in times of war.

The remedy at the disposal of the slave against harsh treatment was running away either to a different part of Coorg, or to cross the border into a neighbouring country. There was, of course, the risk of being pursued, but it is presumed that the slave took this extreme step only when harsh treatment made his position intolerable. Between the farmers of Kiggaṭnāḍ in the extreme south and those in Wynāḍ, however, there was an agreement by which neither followed up absconding slaves who had crossed the frontier. This usually worked in favour of Coorg, where wages were higher than in Wynāḍ, though work was correspondingly heavier. The slaves in Kiggaṭnād and Wynāḍ regularly crossed the frontier once every few years and they had masters on either side. It was very probable that these slaves belonged to one of the several tribes inhabiting the mountains of Wynāḍ, like the Yerava, Beṭṭa Kuruba, Jēnu Kuruba, and so on. They had the reputation of being absconders and thieves and idlers in comparison with Poleyas from the Kannaḍa country. Yeravas and Kurubas from Wynāḍ fetched a lower price than Poleyas in the market. In any case the price of a slave never exceeded Rs13 (about £1).

564 Slavery had a caste component. The masters invariably belonged
567 to the higher castes while the slaves belonged to very low castes. In Coorg the masters generally belonged to castes like Coorgs, Tuḷu Gauḍas, Kannaḍa Okkaligas, and Airis (smiths) while the slaves came from Untouchable castes like Poleyas, Pāleyas, and Mādigas, and tribes like Yeravas, Aḍiyas, Kuḍiyas, and Beṭṭa Kurubas, and Jēnu Kurubas. It is probable that very poor members of the high castes and castes just above the Untouchables, like the Mēdas (makers of basketry work), hired themselves out as agricultural labourers.

It has already been said that a large body of slaves worked on
648 the farms of the Rājas. In 1834 when the British annexed Coorg
567 there were twenty such farms producing nearly 47,000 *bhaṭṭis* of rice with about 1,757 (according to the highest estimate) slaves working on them. The British, who wanted to abolish slavery,

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

started by freeing the slaves on the royal farms, and this was later extended to include all slaves.

There was a landslide in the general economy of the country when the slaves suddenly left their masters to work on the coffee plantations. The masters then found that they were unable to cultivate all the wet land in their estate, but under the conditions of *jamma* tenure they were required to pay an assessment of five rupees per hundred *bhaṭṭis* of land on all wet land irrespective of whether it was under the plough or not. It was then that the government permitted them to sublet not more than a fourth of the wet land.[1]

[1] 'No remission of *jamma*-rent is ever made, except under extraordinary circumstances, such as the death of several members of a family, the entire destruction of property by fire or the loss of a large number of cattle. In these cases and when the produce of their lands has been very meagre, the *jamma* ryots [peasants] are allowed to pay Rs 10 per 100 *bhaṭṭis* for the quantity of land which has been cultivated, instead of *five* rupees *for the whole* farm. It is also customary, under such circumstances, or when only women and young children are left in the house to permit the whole of the *jamma* lands to be sublet on *vāra* tenure [division of the crop in equal halves between the tenant and landlord] for periods ranging from one to five years according to the particulars of each case.' Richter, op. cit., pp. 402–3.

I:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Formerly every Coorg *okka* had one or more Pekoya or other low-caste families attached to it as slaves. This was again an hereditary relationship, and between families and not between individuals.

II

In Coorg the agnatically related males form a corporate body enjoying the bulk of the rights in the *okka*. Men, thanks to patri-locality, are assured of continuous residence in the *okka* to which they belong, whereas the women have to leave their natal *okka* on marriage and become members of their conjugal *okka*. The men have a sense of belonging to the *okka* which is absent in all but the oldest women. A girl has to leave her natal *okka* on marriage, and this break in residential continuity is an important factor having legal and other consequences. It takes a long time[1] for her to be accepted into her conjugal *okka*: only when her children are grown up does she have the assured sense of belonging to her conjugal *okka*.

Sons are the comfort and hope of parents. They are the pillars of the *okka*. They are the means by which the *okka* continues to exist, and the continuity of the *okka* is a matter of the most profound concern to the members. Daughters are destined to leave their natal *okkas* and the children that are born to them enrich and perpetuate a different *okka*.

A woman is not a member of an *okka* in the sense a man is, and the legal rights she enjoys are always inferior to a man's. There are compensations, however. A man enjoys his legal rights in one *okka*, whereas a woman enjoys hers in two, her natal and conjugal *okkas*. A girl is maintained in her natal *okka* till her marriage, or throughout her life if she decides to be a spinster. She has the right to return to her natal *okka* if, for example, her husband is impotent, or suffers from an incurable illness, or if her mother-in-law does not treat her properly. She has a right to return to her natal *okka* if she is divorced, assuming of course that she had not been divorced for a serious offence such as adultery with an Untouchable. Should she be guilty of such an offence she is thrown out of caste irrevocably and this means that she loses her rights in both her natal and her conjugal *okkas*.

At marriage her relatives give her gifts of jewellery, clothes, and vessels. These remain her property, and in the event of her divorce she brings them back to her natal *okka*.

[1] Cross-cousin marriage makes it easier for the girl to be absorbed into her conjugal *okka*.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

has been considered earlier. The economic part of the relationship was certainly very important, but it was only a part of a total relationship which had several aspects. In Coorg folklore there are instances of a servant's great loyalty to his master, and of the latter's great affection for the former. Achchu Koṭṭa, a Poleya servant of Kallumāḍa Ayyaṇṇa, threw himself on the funeral pyre of his master. Ayyaṇṇa was very ill when a caravan from Bēngūr set out for Malabar, and Achchu Koṭṭa joined this caravan against his master's wishes. Before the caravan had crossed into Malabar, Achchu Koṭṭa heard that his master had died. Torn with grief and remorse, Achchu Koṭṭa ran back to Bēngūr only to see the flames of the funeral pyre consuming the body of his dead master. Without a second thought Achchu Koṭṭa jumped into the fire. The members of the Kallumāḍa *okka* erected a stone in memory of Achchu Koṭṭa outside their ancestor-shrine. When an ancestor-propitiation is held in the Kallumāḍa *okka*, offerings of food and drink are made to Achchu Koṭṭa's stone.[1]

Formerly, a man and woman from the servant family or families observed ritual mourning for their dead master or mistress. The bond between master and servant was strong enough to find expression in ritual.

The *de facto* abolition of slavery by the opening of coffee plantations in the middle of the last century, and the great changes of the last hundred years, have contributed to the weakening of the bond between the master-*okka* and the servant families. But even now, when a Poleya does a piece of work, the mistress of the house gives him a small quantity of castor oil in addition to the wages (*kochchi*), paid in paddy. The application of castor oil to the head is supposed to have a 'cooling' effect on the entire body. Hard work, especially in the sun, brings about 'heat' in the body which needs to be 'cooled' by the application of castor oil to the head. The giving of castor oil by the mistress shows her concern for the health and well-being of the servant: it is an act of friendship.

[1] *Paṭṭōḷé Paḷumé*, p. 364.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

[P. 110]

II. PART

The People of Coorg.

1. COMPOSITION AND DENSITY OF THE POPULATION OF COORG.

[101] [167] The country of Coorg has for ages been inhabited by various tribes, which, though not all of the same standing, are distinguished from other castes, that have immigrated at more recent periods from the surrounding countries.

[567] [162] The most ancient and important tribes, which for centuries have been in the relation of masters and slaves, are the Coorgs (Kodagas) and the Holeyas, who together form perhaps one-third of the whole population.

Classified according to their languages and relative rank, claimed by, or accorded to them in the present day, the following are the various tribes in Coorg:

563 A. Tribes who speak the peculiar Coorg language.

1. The *Coorgs* and *Amma Coorgs*, about whom more anon.

2. The *Eimbokalu* (contracted from eivattu-vokkalu i. e. 50 farmers). They are cultivators and in their mode of life, in dress, in superstition and festivals conform to the habits of the Coorgs, but the latter do not eat or intermarry with them. In bodily appearance and complexion they are not so well favoured as the Coorgs and are less spirited in manly pursuits. They came from Mysore in a body of 50, to settle down in Coorg, hence their name. In the Rajahs' time they worshipped

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

581 from fallen nature; but we are not at liberty to record those solitary outbursts of evil passions as an established system or even custom; Hindus might as well regard the disclosures of our divorce-courts as the normal state of European matrimony. Whilst thus vindicating the honor of the married life of the Coorgs, I would not flatter their pride; but rather induce them to render and to maintain their family-hearths pure and honorable withal and to infuse also a better spirit into their public feasts, those popular schools of morality, from which all foul and indecent ribaldry should be banished for ever.

595 *Polygamy* is not prohibited amongst the Coorgs, but it seldom occurs and chiefly in cases, where the first marriage is not blessed with male issue. It also happens, that a young widow is taken to wife by another member of the same house, but this is a voluntary engagement on either part, and the woman loses all claim to her first husband's property, being now the wife of another.

687 The odd expression "*Sirkar wives*" refers to a tyrannical
● 567 practice of the Rajahs, who, when severely punishing a Coorg
564 house, exterminated all the men and reduced the women to a
582 state of slavery, making them to work on the Sirkar farms or Panyas. Any low caste fellow, who applied for a wife to the Rajah, might then obtain one of these poor creatures, and such marriages may account for the comparatively fair and handsome appearance of many a low caste native of Coorg.

586 *Divorce* on account of unfaithfulness is a recognised insti-
624 tution and solemnly carried out by the Aruvas of the unhappy couple and by the Takkas of the village. The children remain in the father's house, the mother returns with all her belongings to the house of her parents. Should a reconciliation take place, the husband of a restored wife is looked down upon with contempt. No refutation of the alleged "communism of women" could be stronger than these facts.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

exists amongst the ryots. The Kiggatnád rice-fields are extensive and fertile, the grass-lands parklike, the mountain streams numerous, and the forests and jungles rich in valuable timber and bamboos. The Marenád- and Brahmagiri-hills with their cascades of the Barapolle and Laksmanatírtha are picturesque and their shólas and dense forests give cover to a variety of game. Many of the undulating grass-hills (Báne), being almost bare of trees and free from stones, seem admirably suited for dry cultivation, besides there are large pieces of other waste land; but the population is rather scanty and hardly sufficient for the cultivation of their rice-fields, since the abolishment of slavery. There are both European and native coffee-plantations in the Marenád-hills; but the natives seem to derive the greater profit from them. This taluq is in great want of good roads. There is only the military highroad from Periapatna to Cannanore, which is joined at the Gonikopal bridge by a branch road leading to Ponnappet; a trace has been cut to the Taluq-Kacheri and on to Kúrchi to connect Coorg with Wynád, but the work has been stopped. From Marenád a steep ghat, called the Mépalé-ghat, leads into the Malabar country and is used by the Lumbánies and Koramárs, who once a year carry rice from and salt into Coorg. A footpath leads into Wynád over the Brahmagiris by way of Tiranelli.

The south-eastern corner of Kiggatnád is unhealthy and strangers can scarcely be induced to settle there, in spite of the nearness of Kuttadámma's famous sanctuary, which cannot render the place more salubrious; fever, spleen and dropsy are the local diseases.

The Taluq-Kacheri is in *Hudikéri*. The place is well selected, being central and in a healthy locality on the top of a beautiful grass hill, whence a fine view of the Brahmagiris and Marenád-hills is obtained. An English School has been lately established and is promising well.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

and when the produce of their lands has been very meagre, the Jamma-ryots are allowed to pay Rs. 10 per 100 butties *for the quantity of land which has been cultivated*, instead of *five* rupees *for the whole farm*. It is also customary, under such circumstances, or when only women and young children are left in the house, to permit the whole of the Jamma-lands to be sublet on vára-tenure (division of the crop in equal halves between the tenant and landlord) for periods ranging from 1 to 5 years according to the particulars of each case. On being invested with the proprietary right to a farm, the Jamma-ryot has to pay a donation of Rs. 10 per 100 butties called "Nuzur Kánike," in 3 yearly instalments, and a fee of Rs. one termed the "Gatti-Jamma fee," on taking possession of the land. On the same terms a Jamma-ryot may claim as much available land, as he may like to cultivate, provided he takes an entire farm, failing which his Jamma-rent is doubled for the additional portion. He likewise may also resign his Jamma-land or Government may, for good reasons, resume it. When invested with the land, by the Superintendent of Coorg, a formula is spoken, intimating, that the holder has received the hereditary right to the land on the feudal conditions laid down, and at the same time a handful of the soil of the land he has applied for is given to him. Similarly when resigning land, the Jamma-ryot lays down before the Superintendent a handful of the soil as a sign of his relinquishment of all rights to the land. Except with the consent of the Government Jamma-land cannot be alienated and is never marketable, nor can it be mortgaged.

A Jamma-farm consists of from 10 to 1,500 butties of wet land, according to the extent of soil susceptible of cultivation and from ancient times it had an apportioned number of slaves as "glebae adscripti." These became liberated under the British Government, but for many years their freedom was merely nominal and the economy of the Coorg houses

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

423 remained undisturbed. But the subsequent settlement of
●567 British planters rudely disturbed the dormant slave-question
648 to the great inconvenience and loss of the Coorgs. Many slaves ran away from their masters who, unable to compete with the Planters' cash-payments, had no means of cultivating their farms. Government, though earnestly appealed to by
423 the Coorgs, could not restore their slaves. The Coorgs then
427 prayed, that they might be allowed, to sublet their Jamma-
648 lands. The question with its various bearings was an important one both in the interest of Government and that of the Jamma-ryots. But the difficulty seems to have been judiciously and satisfactorily solved by Mr. Bowring, the late Chief Commissioner. It was decided, that one quarter of the entire holdings only should be allowed to be sublet on vára and that amongst the new tenants preferential claim should be given

1st to the holder of the farm,
2nd to the proprietor of the adjoining farm,
3rd to the cultivators of the same village,

so that, whilst the subletting Jamma-ryot is not relieved of his feudal obligation to Government, his more powerful or opulent neighbour has to contend against these preferential claimants.

651 That the measure affords relief to the ryots is proved by
423 the fact, that on the 1st April 1870 73 Jamma-ryots had
427 availed themselves of the boon to the extent of 12,642¼ butties of land. At the same time 112 ryots were allowed, on the plea of distress, to sublet Jumma-land amounting to 24,751¼ butties. It is assumed, that the expenses connected with the cultivation of 100 butties of wet land, when the ryot uses his own bullocks, amount to about 71 per cent of the whole out-turn, the land-tax on the holding is Rs. 5 per 100 butties, to which house-tax, Dhúli-paddy and other items, which bring up the total taxation to about 9 per cent, have

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

423 651 per cent and their profits, after deducting all expenses, hardly exceed 7 per cent in good seasons.

Excepting old men and boys in both cases, the number of Ságu-ryots is nearly double that of Jamma-ryots, amounting to 13,500 of whom the greatest number are Gaudas viz. 3654, and next Holeyas, viz. 3605. There are only 40 Coorgs holding land on Ságu-tenure.

423 643 648 It may here be stated, that the late Rájah's twenty farms, called Panyas, which on the assumption of Coorg by the British in 1834 amounted to 46,872½ buttics of land with 168 predial and 1055 disposable slaves were, at the recommendation of the Devána, divided into the original vargas (farms) and disposed of like all other land held on Ságu-tenure, the predial slaves remaining attached to such estates as they belonged to and the others were entrusted to the care of respectable ryots, who were required to maintain them on the same terms as ordinary labourers, paying them the same rate of hire, demanding their attendance only during working hours, and especially allowing them the entire management and control of their family affairs and the settlement of their children's marriages. Some of the Panyas were allotted on Jódi tenure to religious establishments.

[567]

311 651 423 *Waste land*, now taken up for cultivation, is chiefly held on Ságu-tenure. Considering, however, the difficulty and expense of reclaiming waste land for wet cultivation, Government has sanctioned a certain progressive scale of taxation, according to the number of years, such farms have been lying waste. Thus land lain waste for 5-10 years, if brought under cultivation, pays one-fourth of the assessment the first year, half the second, three-quarter the third and the full amount of tax the fourth year. Besides this graduated assessment, for land left uncultivated from

10 to 15 years one year's assessment is remitted,
15 „ 25 „ two „ „ „